

Top 5 Questions

December 2014

1. What are the possible causes and widely held perceptions regarding the teacher shortage, and what can be done about it?

There are many factors that may be contributing to the teacher shortage (eg., demographics, compensation structures, competition, public service ethic). It's also important to note that the shortage of potential employees is not contained to K-12 education; there are a number of fields in our state struggling to find skilled workers. But the bottom line is this: With an expected growing number of retirements (i.e., Baby Boomers leaving the workforce), the pipeline to replace these teachers may not be sufficient.

While teacher pay is a piece of the puzzle, it is not the sole piece. The complexity of the situation will require us to think creatively regarding potential solutions. For example, in recent years, state lawmakers have provided incentives, in the form of scholarships, for people to enter the teaching profession. The Dakota Corps Scholarship and the Critical Teaching Needs Scholarship both assist students in financing their postsecondary education if they agree to teach in designated fields in South Dakota for a certain period of time. Other attempts to address the issue – for example, the alternative compensation ideas proposed through HB 1234 and the proposed sales tax increase defeated at the ballot box that same year – have been forwarded but were not accepted by South Dakota voters.

Teacher shortage/pay will be a primary topic of discussion during the upcoming legislative session. In the meantime, one thing educators can do immediately (and on an ongoing basis) is to identify and nurture those young people that show an interest in becoming a teacher by highlighting the positive aspects of a career in education.

2. The state is providing free training for schools through the PD menu of options. However, many of the identified areas of training require multiple days. How can schools work these days of training into the school year? Is there any money coming from DOE to pay teachers to come in during the summer for training?

Districts have flexibility in scheduling these trainings over the course of the next two years. For example, a single training can be scheduled over time; the training does **not** need to be delivered on consecutive days. As another example: If a district would like an ESA to deliver a training, or portion of a training, and come back to conduct classroom coaching on the content learned, that is also acceptable. There is not funding available to provide teacher

stipends in the summer.

Finally, the state is working with ESAs to schedule regional district leadership retreats to assist districts in analyzing data from this year’s statewide survey, to celebrate bright spots, and to identify additional support needed and to plan for that support. Registration will be available soon at <https://southdakota.gosignmeup.com/>

If districts would prefer to have an ESA conduct a planning session for their district only, districts may use one of the state-sponsored days for this opportunity.

Regional Retreats	
TENTATIVE Date	TENTATIVE Location
Friday, Jan. 9	Rapid City
Tuesday, Jan. 13	Kadoka
Tuesday, Jan. 20	Vermillion
Wednesday, Jan. 21	Sioux Falls
Thursday, Jan. 22	Mitchell
Thursday, Jan. 22	Mobridge
Friday, Jan. 23	Pierre
Friday, Jan. 23	Platte
Tuesday, Jan. 27	Watertown
Wednesday, Jan. 28	Aberdeen
Thursday, Jan. 29	Huron
Thursday, Feb. 5	Madison

3. How will DOE account for the demographics of at-risk categories (free and reduced lunch, SPED) in calculating the School Performance Index regarding the growth measurement?

Ensuring that schools are held accountable for and focused on the performance of historically underperforming students – which largely consists of students in the at-risk subgroups – has been a priority throughout the development of the current School Performance Index, or SPI. This stems from the concept that it is seemingly unfair to compare the academic performance of students from the defined “at-risk” categories to students who have not faced the same socio-demographic risks. With this approach, demographic subgroups are used as a proxy for historically poorer academic performance to ensure that schools are held accountable for the performance of these students.

With the approach of the student growth percentile model, that accommodation is no longer as necessary because many of those factors are already embedded into the model. Each student is compared to his or her academic peers – that is, those students across the

state who, in the past, have performed similarly on previous assessments. An additional focus will be placed on underperforming students through the point structure devised for this indicator. To determine the SPI points for the Academic Growth Indicator at the elementary and middle school levels, half the points will be calculated based on the performance of the lowest 25 percent of students in a district or school; the other half will be calculated based on the growth of all students. This emphasis on underperforming students focuses attention on those students struggling the most (which most often consists of students in our identified Gap groups, i.e., Black, Native American, Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and Limited English Proficient) to ensure that they are not “masked” by the performance of the student population at large.

4. How does the state meet its maintenance of effort to quality for IDEA funds?

The standard for state maintenance of effort (MOE) is different than MOE at the local level. For the LEA MOE, the comparison is expenditure from year to year. For SEAs, the comparison is the amount of state financial support made available for special education and related services from year to year, regardless of the amount actually expended. This includes not only funding provided by the Department of Education through the state aid to special education funding formula, but also includes support from other state agencies such as the Board of Regents, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Corrections. The table below shows the State of South Dakota MOE for the past 6 fiscal years:

		FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
DHS							
	HSC	\$ 48,174	\$ 49,635	\$ 49,635	\$ 49,970	\$ 51,650.51	\$ 53,604.82
DOC							
	Special Ed Students	\$ 61,857	\$ 63,156	\$ 60,998	\$ 68,135	\$ 43,056.49	\$ 46,174.51
BOR							
	SDSD	\$ 3,725,790	\$ 3,038,929	\$ 3,102,761	\$ 2,658,655	\$ 2,593,304	\$ 2,652,564
	SDSBVI	\$ 2,683,922	\$ 2,686,245	\$ 2,660,972	\$ 2,458,348	\$ 2,583,023	\$ 2,683,788
DOE							
	SEA Admin	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	SA SpEd Appropriation	\$ 45,127,372	\$ 46,795,542	\$ 42,732,190	\$ 45,415,601	\$ 45,613,203	\$ 53,045,151
	Base Transfer				\$ 197,602	0	\$ -
	Carryover Funds	\$ 2,512,847	\$ 2,594,823	\$ 6,658,175	\$ 4,416,420	\$ 4,416,420	\$ -
	TOTAL	\$ 54,159,962	\$ 55,228,330	\$ 55,264,731	\$ 55,264,731	\$ 55,300,657	\$ 58,481,282
	Increase (Decrease)		\$ 1,068,367	\$ 36,401	\$ 0	\$ 35,926	\$ 3,180,625